

NSC BRIEFING

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29 May 1958

**FRANCE--NORTH AFRICA**

- I. Efforts to establish De Gaulle govt by constitutional means have hung up on Socialist opposition.
  - A. Mollet apparently had been swung over, but large majority of his deputies have thus far balked.
  - B. Coty now using pressure by Presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate to convince Socialists.
  - C. Number of Socialists appear willing to carry out threat to go underground no matter how De Gaulle comes in.
- II. Coty's failure markedly increase prospect of violence.
  - A. Paris demonstrations by Communists and non-Communist leftists orderly but impressive--50 to 100,000.
  - B. 1. Commies reportedly have organized <sup>anti-</sup>Fascist committees in 28 departments.
  - B. Continued Socialists opposition--which may even upset Mollet moderate leadership--encourages Communist Popular Front drive.
- III. Independent leader Pinay believes appearance of De Gaulle in Assembly could still swing majority to him.
  - A. Unlikely that De Gaulle would accept such approach since he refused thus far to recognize Assembly role in the Republic.
  - B. Possibility of "band wagon" still exists, however, if Coty can dramatize lack of alternatives.
- IV. Speed now essential--army in Algeria ready to mount armed attack against metropole if necessary.
  - A. Algerian junta has already set ultimatum to Paris.
  - B. De Gaulle now appears willing to accept accession by force.

**De Gaulle's Policy Views**

- V. De Gaulle sees need for complete reform of political institutions. Pronouncements on economic policy ambiguous.
- A. His conditions for returning are reportedly guarantee of untrammelled authority for specified period, during which he would solve urgent problems and work out constitution providing stronger executive.
1. He might send assembly on vacation, recalling it later to approve new constitution.
  2. After this period, De Gaulle would presumably step down.
- B. De Gaulle believes North Africa cannot be treated piecemeal.
1. Although he has said that it is too late for any Algerian policy based on assimilation or integration, claimed success among Moslems of integrationist line advocated by Algiers regime may modify this position.
  2. De Gaulle may still envisage long-term solution of an autonomous Algerian state, which, along with Tunisia, Morocco, would be federally associated with France.
  3. De Gaulle will still be faced with almost insoluble problem. Because of his relatively liberal views, the Right may break with him. On other hand, FLN seems determined to settle for nothing less than independence. Army wants honorable solution and probably would accept one considerably more liberal than extremists may think.
- C. In private, De Gaulle has proclaimed basic friendship for US despite frequent criticism of certain US policies.

1. Recently, however, he has become obsessed with notion that US is out to "nibble away" remainder of French Empire.
  - (a) Moreover, he is suspicious that US will make bi-lateral "deal" with USSR at expense of France.
- D. He recalls his 1944 pact with USSR and reportedly would not be necessarily hostile to Moscow.
  1. Since Stalin's death, he sees possibilities of French-Soviet "deal" to give Europe time to "rebuild strength."
  2. He believes Soviets not interested in making war.
  3. He may be influenced by reported assurances of Vinogradov that Moscow prefers having France rather than US in Africa.
- E. Thus we believe De Gaulle would attempt to build up French strength and use it to push policy bordering at times on neutralism.
- F. Although he recently stated privately that he was prepared to withdraw France from NATO, there are signs he might now be unwilling to break completely, but use threat for bargaining.
- G. De Gaulle's attitude toward European integration is ambivalent.
  1. On one hand he fought EDC and makes no secret of desire to pull out of Common Market and probably EURATOM.
  2. On other hand, De Gaulle professes to favor "United Europe" (apparently without supernational institution), to include England, and with close French-German relations.

Foreign Reaction

- VI. In Germany Brentano takes dark view--fears public would regard De Gaulle take-over as failure of Adenauer's foreign policy. Sees De Gaulle upsetting NATO and integration.
- VII. Soviets probably feel De Gaulle's probable policies on NATO and European integration would be to their advantage.
- A. On other hand, it would not serve Soviet interest should De Gaulle achieve Algerian settlement. Such a settlement, if possible, would weaken UAR and lessen Commie capabilities for causing trouble in North Africa.
- B. Moscow probably expects that De Gaulle take-over would be good chance for some cooperation between Commies and Socialists in opposition, possibly even leading to popular front govt.
- C. On balance, De Gaulle government would probably provide USSR and French Commies with more opportunities <sup>as well as</sup> than risks.

Algeria

- VIII. Pflimlin resignation hailed as important victory by Algiers regime. However, junta spokesman has made clear only De Gaulle solution acceptable.
- A. Pflimlin's fall and 27 May De Gaulle statement may forestall any radical action by army in Algeria for time being.

25X1

- C. Meanwhile, new leaders continuing to promote displays of alleged "new unity" between Moslems and Europeans in Algeria and to claim guerrilla war greatly reduced since 13 May.
1. This psychological campaign aimed at convincing metropole support recent Algerian events surest means ending long war.
  2. Moslem participation variously motivated--including ignorance, coercion, war weariness, boredom, opportunism, fear and probably some genuine hopefulness that De Gaulle might somehow bring improvement. But most unlikely their participation staged rallies reflects honest desire be "Frenchmen" as junta claims.
  3. Anyway, junta's attempts to woo Moslems has made no perceptible dent in determination FLN to fight on for independence. This made clear by rebel spokesman [redacted]
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- [redacted]
4. Any Moslems taken in by wild promises of full "integration" with French almost certainly headed toward new disillusionment as any real integration would be unacceptable in metropole and to most local Europeans.

Tunisia and Morocco

- IX. Tunisia and Morocco taking steps to combat possible French reoccupation.
- A. Tunisian civilians mobilized after clashes at Gafsa and Remada last week.

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**E. Both Morocco and Tunisia want total French evacuation.**

- 1. Bourguiba has rejected French offer of partial evacuation in two months, demands implementation of good offices. proposals--total evacuation of 9,000 troops outside Bizerte.**
- 2. French charge Tunisian military, armed civilians and Algerian rebel units menace garrisons (700 men each) at Sfax and Gafsa; Tunisians claim this is "precautionary defensive" measure.**

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